

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-17 are pending in this application. Claims 1-4 and 6-17 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Okigami in view of Antziopoulos. By this amendment, independent claims 1 and 8 have been amended to further clarify features of the claimed invention. Support for these amendments is found in the original specification, thus no new matter has been added. In view of these amendments, the rejection of claim 1-4 and 6-17 is overcome for the following reasons.

Okigami shows a system for remotely monitoring a device or devices connected to an extranet. The Antziopoulos reference shows a device with means for monitoring the intended life of a part in a copier system. The intended life is measured against the actual usage of the part through the use of a copy counter, to determine when the part should be replaced. According to Antziopoulos, each replacement component in a copier system is associated with a level of use indicator. The level of use indicator tracks how many copies have been made with each component and determines when each component has reached its expected usable life. The expected usable life of the component is stored, in one embodiment, on a magnetic card that may be inserted into the copier system to activate the machine after a replacement component is inserted.

The system described by Antziopoulos differs from the system of the present application in a significant manner. As recited in amended claims 1 and 8, the present system recites that the “controller of said terminal apparatus updates based on said identification information and said operation value of each part transmitted from said management apparatus and the corresponding operation value of said identification information stored in said first memory.” This feature is not taught, described, or suggested by Antziopoulos, Okigami or any other reference. According to the claimed embodiments of this invention, information is transmitted from the terminal apparatus to

the management apparatus that identifies each replacement part and the total usage of each part. The management apparatus collates this information to determine how long the identified part has been in operation over its lifetime. For example, if a part is removed from a malfunctioning copier system and used as a replacement part in a functioning system, the management apparatus would be able to accurately determine how much life remains in the replacement part, despite it having been previously installed in another copier. This feature is not shown by Antziopoulos.

The system taught by Antziopoulos does not provide for the situation where a replacement part may be used in more than one copier. Antziopoulos' system is directed toward the situation where replacement components are installed by a user or technician that have a usable life that cannot be determined by the central memory of the copier system. Since the central memory of the copier system doesn't know the usable life of a component (and since certain manufacturers may make replacement components with varying usable lifespans), the system would be unable to determine when a component is due for replacement. To overcome this, Antziopoulos suggests the use of a magnetic data card that is inserted into the machine to active it once a component is installed. The data card would include information about the usable life of the component. In contrast, the system and method of the present invention permit the usage information of a part to be monitored continuously and is independent from the apparatus in which the part may be presently installed. Since Antziopoulos does not teach any method or system for removing a component from a copier, writing data onto a card, and reinstalling that component in another apparatus, the reference cannot show all of the claimed features of the present invention. Further, since none of the cited references provide features which allow the usage of a part to be monitored independently from the apparatus in which it is installed, none of the references alone, or in combination, can show each and every feature of the present invention.

The system and method of independent claims 1 and 8 recites features that permit a management apparatus to track the usage of the replacement part through its entire lifetime. Through this system, more efficient and economical use of replacement components can be achieved without endangering the functionality of a copier system by using components that have exceeded their lifespan. At the same time, a component that has not exceeded its lifespan can be removed from one machine and used in another machine, thereby reducing replacement component costs while still being assured that it will not be used past its usable life. Neither Okigami or Antziopoulos teach, disclose, or suggest that the “said controller of said terminal apparatus updates based on said identification information and said operation value of each part transmitted from said management apparatus and the corresponding operation value of said identification information stored in said first memory”. Therefore, none of the references, when taken alone, or in combination, can allow for the continuous tracking of part-life data, such as a counter value, when a certain part has been used in a plurality of apparatuses. For these reasons, the combination of cited references do not show each and every limitation of claims 1 and 8 and the rejection of these claims and claims depending therefrom should be withdrawn.

Claim 15 is directed toward “a memory for storing identification information of each part used in said terminal apparatus and an accumulated data corresponding to an operation of each part in a mutually related manner wherein said accumulated data includes data indicating the actual usage of each part over its life, including the actual usage of each part that has been used a plurality of apparatus”. As previously remarked, the cited references do not describe a system that can track a parts’ accumulated data or usage in a plurality of apparatuses. Further, neither cited reference teaches that the accumulated data of each part is updated based on data sent from the terminal apparatus. The references when combined, therefore, cannot show this feature. The rejection of claim 15 and claims depending therefrom should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice thereof is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the independent claims 1-4 and 6-17 under 35 USC 103(a). If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 32577-2019400. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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